

A Journey Into the Lives of People

A Boy Finds the Beauty Of Worship for the Man

Editor's Note: Among the greatest contributors to the stability and the cultural enrichment of a community are the churches and the pastors of that community.

The spiritual aspirations of a man who becomes a clergyman are powerful and impelling forces which send him on a journey into the lives of his fellow men and women, sharing their innermost thoughts, their hopes as well as their fears, as they seek the strength and the inspiration that only faith can bring to the human mind.

As a means of enabling our readers to become better acquainted with those fine men who serve the spiritual needs of the citizens of Torrance, The Press is publishing Sunday series which we call, "Know Your Pastor." The second of the series follows. Today's pastor is Rev. Gilbert S. Zimmerman, of the First Methodist Church.

What most men call an office, a pastor calls his study. The difference is that an office is an office, but when you enter a pastor's study, you enter a different world, which is the mind of the individual pastor who occupies that study.

For instance, when you enter the study of Rev. Gilbert S. Zimmerman all about you are the busy workaday sounds that one hears in any busy modern office.

Phones ring. Voices call to one another. Doors open and close. Typewriters clatter in the same busy rhythm of any business office.

But all that fades away as Rev. Zimmerman begins to talk, and you enter a completely different world through a door opened by the mind of the pastor of the First Methodist Church in Torrance, at 1551 El Prado.

The pictures of that world that flash through the mind as Rev. Zimmerman talks range from a four-year-old boy who saw beauty in people worshipping together to the shapeless outline of a church in ruins in Africa.

The quick contrast from a busy, even bustling, office to the quiet of a sensitive, imaginative, questing, mind outlines clearly the mission of a pastor in the lives of people today, and defines why that office is not an office, but a study.

There is a curious mixture of the businessman and the contemplative quiet of the sanctuary in the life of a pastor. He must briskly and efficiently bring the material needs of his people in order to serve their spiritual urges.

As Rev. Zimmerman puts it, "you must have the tools, you must create physical surroundings of beauty to nourish the spirit and to give your people pride in what they see."

Rev. Zimmerman has done this amply and well in the 22 years since he began to minister to the spiritual needs of his people back in a country church in a country town in Colorado. It is, in a sense, ironical that a pastor should begin his career in a town called Last Chance, but that is just what Rev. Zimmerman did.

"Since ordination," says Rev. Zimmerman, recalling the material building that he has done, "I have administered the erection of two sanctuaries, three major church school buildings, four parsonages, and the relocation of a church on an eight-acre suburban site."

Those are among the material achievements of the ministry of Rev. Zimmerman. The spiritual achievements are much greater, but also very much more difficult to capture into words.

It goes back to four-year-old Gilbert Zimmerman as he stands in a church shaking hands with the people as his way of communicating to them the beauty that he sees in men and women worshipping in a common belief which links and lifts them beyond the rigid limits of mortal life and the knowledge of man upon earth.

The years pass and, in 1940, the four-year-old boy has grown into Gilbert Zimmerman, a junior college student, who sings professionally over the radio and with the popular dance bands of the day.

Young Zimmerman is a very successful singer, and his rewards in money and the material blessings of life are great, indeed, but—somehow—he feels a gnawing in his soul.

It was then that young Zimmerman stopped to take an inner look at his discontent and, as the older Gilbert Zimmerman says today, "decided to make a decision on that something that was

from the University of Redlands, then left California for the east to attend the School of Theology of Boston University and, while there, to minister to the needs of the people of the First Congregational Church in Acton, Massachusetts.

A fully ordained minister of the church in 1947 after six years of actual ministry, Rev. Zimmerman returned to California to become pastor of the First Methodist Church at Encinitas, California.

By 1949, Rev. Zimmerman was at the First Methodist Church in San Luis Obispo to meet a youth by the name of Dean Freudenberger. This meeting carried a great influence into the lives of both men.

Rev. Zimmerman influenced young Freudenberger toward the ministry, and young Freudenberger's ministry has influenced the life and ministry of Rev. Zimmerman.

From San Luis Obispo, Rev. Zimmerman in 1954 journeyed to St. Marks Methodist Church, in the southwestern part of the city of Los Angeles, and on July 1, 1959, his journey into the lives of people led to Torrance.

The man who as a four-year-old boy stood and shook hands with people in a church still enjoys "a friendly, warm feeling to-

ward people who worship together and like each other."

The man who as a youth turned his back upon a successful and lucrative singing career has never looked back over his shoulder in regret. "My ministry has been a rich and rewarding one," says Rev. Zimmerman.

The warmth and richness that his ministry has brought into the life of Rev. Zimmerman is returned to the lives of people with whom he comes in contact, both here in Torrance and in other places, such as in Africa, oceans away, through men such as Rev. Dean Freudenberger, who have felt Rev. Zimmerman's influence.

You see, young Freudenberger, who went into the ministry under the guidance and inspiration of Rev. Zimmerman, graduated from Cal Poly and went to Africa as a missionary to establish an agricultural college which became self-supporting in the short span of only five years.

In turn, the influence of young Freudenberger upon Rev. Zimmerman has drawn the Torrance pastor to Africa and all of its many challenges.

Last year, Rev. Zimmerman visited Dr. Albert Schweizer in Africa and now does extensive lecturing to transfer the knowledge and information he gained from Dr. Schweizer's work to the

people of this country.

Next summer, Rev. Zimmerman takes a team of adult workmen into Southern Rhodesia to rebuild a church destroyed by people maddened by the terrible emotional fervor created by a mob in riot.

"Africa is the world's new frontier," says Rev. Zimmerman in the quiet of his study in Torrance. "The emerging leadership of that fron-

tier excites and inspires me."

Not so long ago, Rev. Zimmerman brought Dr. Richard Freidmann, the medical director of Dr. Schweizer's hospital to present him to the city of Torrance through its City Council.

"Dr. Freidmann," says Rev. Zimmerman, "points out to us all the true turmoil of Africa by describing Africa as 'tribe after tribe of regional cultures and tribal

loyalties drawn together only by the negative common factors of hunger, disease, superstition and fear."

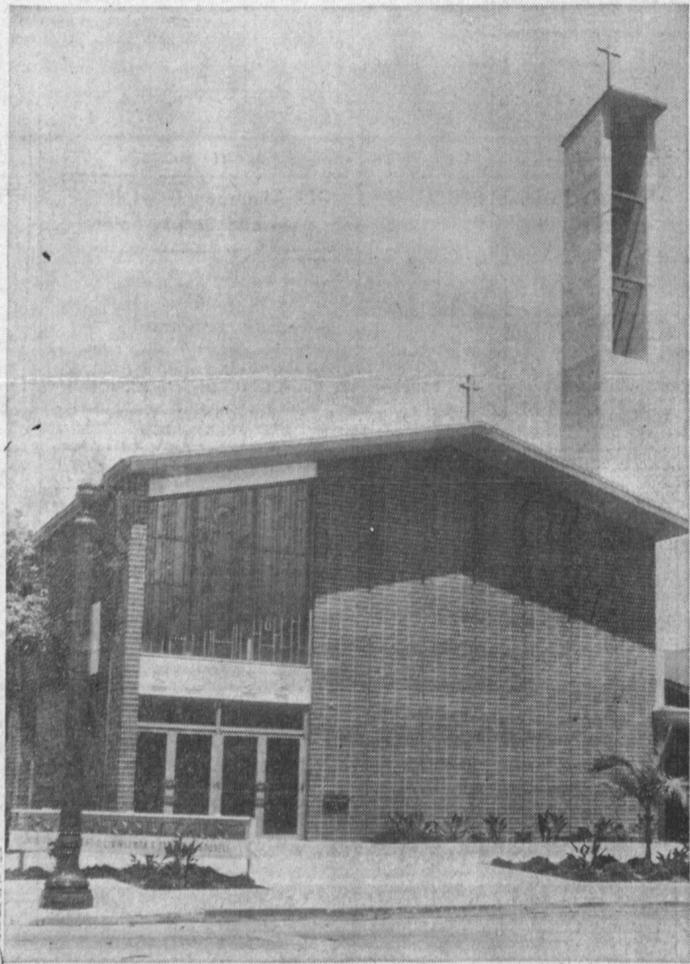
But, Rev. Zimmerman adds, "there is hope and you sense that hope by talking to the emerging leaders of Africa who are intelligent—and hopeful."

There also is hope in the journey of a pastor into the lives of his fellow human beings, because he blazes

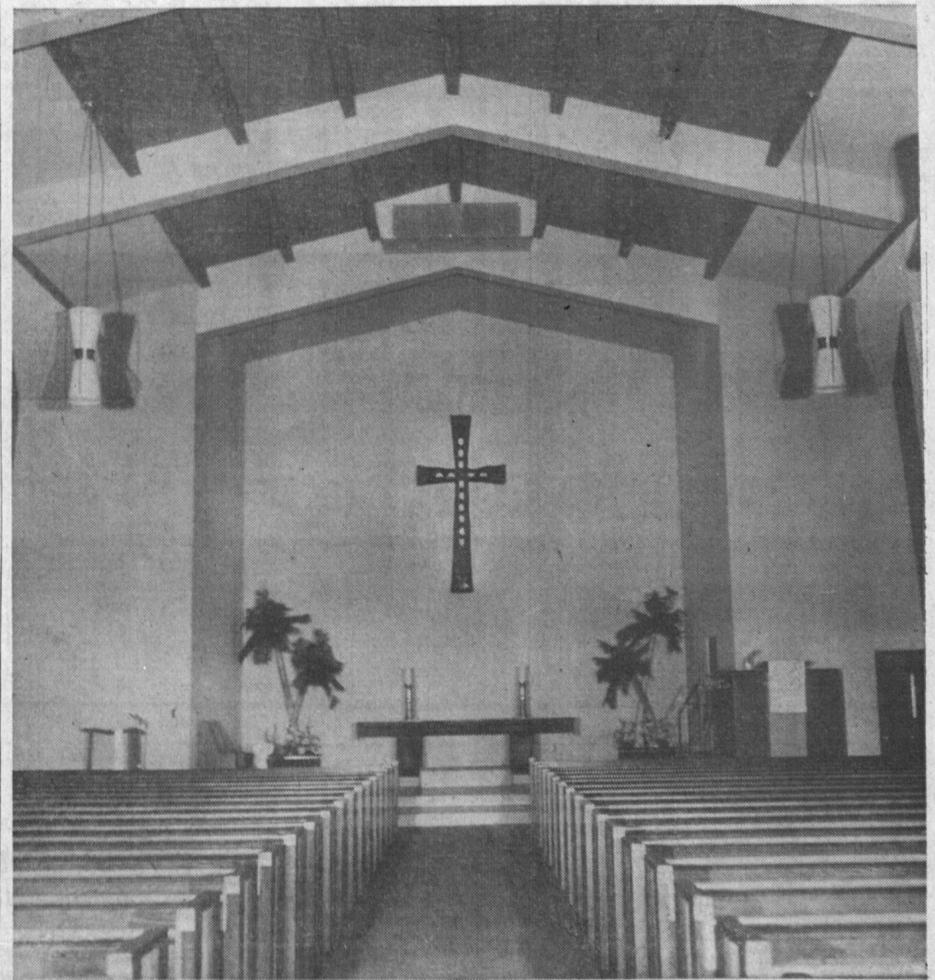
trails of hopefulness into dark areas of hopelessness.

Dean Freudenberger is just one witness of this accomplishment in the journey of Gilbert Zimmerman

which began when he was four to bring him to Torrance to work for us here while his mind ranges to such wonderful achievements as the rebuilding of a church, oceans away in the heart of Africa.



THE EXTERIOR VIEW of the First Methodist Church, on El Prado, in Torrance, is a classic example of simplicity and exemplifies Rev. Zimmerman's use of beauty to nourish the spirit.



THE LIVING CROSS of the First Methodist Church, of Torrance, was designed and created by a local sculptor, Paul Salzburg, and is massively constructed out of concrete and fiber glass to command attention in the interior view of the church.

ATTEND WORKSHOP

St. Matthew Lutheran Church vacation bible school teachers attended a vacation bible school workshop yesterday at the Lafayette Hotel, Long Beach, Rev. E. M. Passow, pastor, announced.

A. W. Wacholz, principal of St. Matthew's Christian Day School, will be in charge of the St. Matthew's Vacation Bible School to be held at the church the first two weeks in July.

FASHION SHOW HELD

Bethel 36, International Order of Jobs Daughters, recently held their semi-annual project, featuring a luncheon and fashion show. Fashions from Joel's South Bay were modeled by several girls and mothers.

Spring Flowers was the theme. Judy Gustafson, senior princess, was chairman. Models were: Margaret Roemisch, Elaine Platz, Jane Gustafson, Jane Shores, Kathy Sharp, Jolene Elliott, Mrs. Hal Platz, and Mrs. Don Shores.

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- NARBONNE AVENUE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH**—24730 Narbonne Ave. Lomita. DA 4-6522. Church 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
- CATHOLIC**
ST. LAWRENCE CATHOLIC CHURCH—1900 Fullis Ave., Redondo Beach. Mon signor Daniel P. Collins. Mass 7, 8, 9, 10, 11:15, 12:15. FR 8-6037.
- CHURCH OF GOD**
SOUTH BAY CHURCH OF GOD—17661 Yukon Ave. Phone 323-3970. Rev. C. L. Tierney, 17615 Yukon, Torrance. First morning service 8:30 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; second morning service, 11:30 a.m.; Sunday night service 7:30 p.m. Mid-week services, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
- FOUR SQUARE CHURCH**
FOUR SQUARE CHURCH—Corner of Arlington and Sepulveda. Telephone, DA 4-2072. Rev. and Mrs. James P. Lowen, pastors. Sunday: school, 9:30 a.m.; morning worship, 10:45 a.m.; group services, 6:00 p.m.; Y.P. Cadets (Defenders), Evangelistic, 7:15 p.m. Mid-week, Wednesday Bible study at 7:15 p.m. Public invited.
- LUTHERAN**
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH—Located on Carson St. and Flower Ave. in Torrance. Mrs. J. Roleder, pastor. Residence, 1625 Flower Ave. Phone FA 8-3249. Church office, 1725 Flower Ave. FA 0-4181. First Church worship 8 a.m.; Sunday School 9:45 a.m. and 9:45 a.m.; second morning worship, 10:45 a.m.

Is YOUR CHURCH listed on the fastest growing, most promising church page in the South Bay area? If not, call DA 5-1515 and ask for Ronnie Saunders, Church Editor.

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